AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION DIVISION
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

THE FIFTH ANNUAL MINNESOTA CARLOAD BABY BEEF CONTEST

1929 - 1930

W. E. Morris

Conclusions

1. It pays to creep feed grain to the calves while running with their dams. At least 100 pounds can be added to the weight of the calf by weaning time in this way on a consumption of about 300 pounds of grain.

2. Some feeders of baby beef calves do not feed a sufficiently generous ration, to secure the maximum gains during the first 60 to 90 days of the feeding period. After the calves are once on feed, nearly full feeding of grain until they go to market is desirable. A full feed is about 1¾ pounds of grain per day for each 100 pounds the calf weighs.

3. The best ration for maximum gains is not fed by some feeders. Oats is sometimes used in too large amounts resulting in reduced gains. Corn or barley should constitute the bulk of the ration with oats limited to not more than 20% of the grain fed once the calves are on full feed.

4. Too generous feeding of roughage reduces gains. Baby beef production is a means of disposing of grain not roughage. The cow herd will take care of the rough feed and be maintained that way at a low cost.

5. By skillful feeding, pail fed calves can be fattened as rapidly as calves nursing their dams. Feeding utensils must be kept sanitary.

6. The steers in each contest outgained the heifers, but have not finished as early.

7. Medium to big type bulls with scale and thickness are the desirable kind of sires to use for baby beef production.

8. Medium to large thick fleshed cows make up the herds of the winning contestants. This indicates that cows of this type are the most desirable kind for baby beef production.

9. In each lot a wide variation is found in the weight of calves of the same age even though sired and fed alike. The difference, may be attributed to the breeding ability of the dams and the results indicate clearly that considerably larger returns may be secured by culling cow herds on the basis of their ability to produce calves which go through the feed lot making satisfactory growth and finish.

10. A protein supplement will usually pay.

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These contests have been conducted to locate the most successful baby beef feeders, to study the methods followed by these men, and to encourage others to follow the procedure that has proved successful.

RESULTS

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Name	Address	County	Breed	Av. Weight per Calf	Rank
O. A. Solve & Sons	Hancock	Stevens	Hereford	937.5	1
James Ellsworth	Magnolia	Rock	Hereford	892.6	2
Daly Brothers	Granada	Martin	Hereford	857.75	3
Ostrem Brothers	Lanesboro	Fillmore	Aberdeen Angus	855.25	4
Cox Brothers	Adrian	Nobles	Hereford	846.41	5
John C. Wester	Adrian	Nobles	Hereford	837.0	6
Bolstad Brothers	Winger	Polk	Hereford	835.0	7
H. C. Hanson	Evan	Redwood	Hereford	830.0	8

The results of the fifth annual Minnesota carload baby beef contest compare with those from the four previous contests when allowances are made for the difference in the length of the feeding periods. The winning load in the first contest averaged 1056 pounds; the second contest, 1040 pounds; the third contest, 953 pounds; the fourth contest, 935 pounds; and the fifth contest, 937. The last three were for calves averaging 40 days less in age than for the first two years.

In the first two contests, each lot of calves was weighed up when they averaged 450 days of age. Objections were raised by contestants to the length of the feeding period so the time was shortened to 410 days average age for the lots in the third contest.

The reasons for the change were:

1. In the longer period heifers were finishing sooner than the steers and in a few instances sold below the steers because of being overdone. The shorter period has taken care of this.

2. The longer period required more financing in the holding of the cattle and purchasing of feed.

3. The feeders desired to market before hot weather and fly time set in.

The change to 410 days has overcome these objections, but in several of the lots, the calves were not yet ready for market and were held longer in the feed lot after being weighed up.

No other changes have been made in the following rules:

1. The calves must be born between February 1 and July 31.

2. They may run with their dams or be pail fed.

3. The dams may be grade or purebred cows of beef breeding but the sires must be purebred beef bulls.

4. No limitations are placed on feeds used or methods of feeding.

5. Fifteen calves constitute a carload but 20 head may be entered and the 15 heaviest taken as the load. The extra calves are allowed as a precaution against loss of calves, injuries, and a handicap from poor feeding individuals.

1930 WINNERS

O. A. Solve and Sons, Hancock, Stevens county, won first place in this, the fifth annual contest, with an average weight of 937.5 pounds. The calves were grade and purebred Herefords from medium to big type cows and sired by a medium sized, low set, compact, mature purebred Hereford bull.

Management of cow herd. Mr. Solve likes mixed grass for pasture to give variety; accordingly, the cows were pastured on a mixture of bromus, sweet clover, and alfalfa from May 15 until they were turned into the meadows and stubble fields after haying and harvest. When corn husking was completed about November 1, the cows had the run of these fields. These sources of feed were ample until about November 15. The winter feeding period was from November 1 to May 4. No grain was fed up to January 1, corn fodder and oats straw comprised the ration. For the remainder of the winter the cows received a full feed of corn silage, sweet clover hay, and corn fodder with free access to oat straw.

Management of the Calves. These calves ran with their dams until October 25 when they were weaned. They received no grain until after weaning. All the bulls were castrated when about two weeks of age. Early castrating is always followed as the Solve's believe castration at an early age is less of a set back to the calves. Part of the lot were dehorned with caustic. The later born calves were not dehorned.

The calves were hand fed grain twice daily. Water and salt were always available.

Rations used. These calves were started on feed October 25 with whole oats as the ration. This was gradually increased for two weeks, then corn and barley added. By November 25 the ration had been changed to ½ shelled corn, ¼ barley and ¼ oats with alfalfa hay and corn silage as the roughage. This ration was continued until January 13. Then shelled corn 14 pounds, linseed oil meal 1 pound, and alfalfa hay and corn silage made up the ration. On February 15 the silage was discontinued while the grain ration was increased gradually. After May 1, barley replaced ½ the corn in the ration as their corn was running short. This ration was continued to the end.

They topped the market at South St. Paul when sold, the heifers bringing the same as the steers.

James Ellsworth, Magnolia, Rock county, won second place in this the fifth annual contest, with an average weight of 893 pounds. His calves were grade and purebred Herefords from medium to big type cows and sired by a big type, thick fleshed, purebred Polled Hereford bull.

Three of the calves were pail fed while the balance ran with the cows. At the conclusion of the contest the pail fed calves were the equal of any in the lot.

The pail fed calves received whole milk for three weeks, then skimmilk replaced one-half of the whole milk for one week, following which skimmilk only was fed. This was continued throughout the summer. Oats was given as soon as the calves would eat it and full fed during the summer with the addition of some ground corn. The calves were weaned and started on feed November 1, 1928. The ration at the

start consisted of oats and corn and cob meal equal parts, ¾ pound oil meal daily and alfalfa hay. On December 1, the ration was changed to ½ shelled corn. By January 1 shelled corn, 75% with about 25% oats with oil meal made up the grain ration--alfalfa and clover hay supplied the roughage. The amount of feed was increased as they would take it. They were fed three times daily at regular meal times. If any showed a lack of appetite, feeding was reduced to twice daily. The same ration, corn, oats, oil meal, and alfalfa was continued to the end of the feeding trial but in increased amounts. These calves had the run of a good shed in which the roughage was fed. The grain bunk was located in the yard as was the covered water tank which was kept from freezing. Barrel salt was fed to insure sufficient consumption.

The calves topped the market at Sioux City.

The Cost of a Baby Beef Calf

The men in this contest believe they are warranted in maintaining a cow herd with which to produce their own baby beef calves, for these reasons:

1. That they are assured a crop of calves of known quality which take to feed more readily and finish quicker than shipped in calves.

2. Cow herds utilize a vast amount of cheap roughage which would otherwise be largely wasted.

3. A beef cow herd requires little investment in buildings and can be wintered on low priced feeds.

4. This type of beef production adapts itself easily to large farms with a scarcity of labor.

5. Speculation in beef production is reduced to a minimum in this way.

6. Cost estimates from contestants indicate that the last few years it has cost about $35.00 to keep a cow a year, which is the cost of her calf at weaning. It would appear that under conditions prevailing in recent years these home grown calves have cost the owner in his feed lot less than they could have been bought for.

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